

STATE OF COLORADO

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

130 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792
Phone: (303) 866-2087



Jane E. Norton
Lieutenant Governor

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Contact: Garrett Groves
(303) 866-3125

NORTON PRESENTS 2003 COLORADO CARES VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Fourteen Coloradans and One Business Receive Volunteer Service Awards

(Denver) – Outstanding volunteers who make a difference in their communities were honored by Governor Bill Owens and Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton yesterday at a reception at the Governor's executive residence. Norton awarded the Governor's 2003 Colorado Cares Volunteer Service Awards to fourteen citizens and one business recognized for their tireless efforts to assist others in their community.

"Volunteers have a powerful impact on the strength and well-being of Colorado's communities," said Governor Bill Owens. "We're thankful for the dedication of this year's recipients of the Volunteer Service Award because they are making a difference in the lives of many Coloradans throughout the state."

Lieutenant Governor Norton has direct supervision of Colorado's mentoring and community service activities, including Colorado Cares Day. Colorado Cares was created in 1999 by Governor Bill Owens as a day of service in recognition of Colorado's statehood, and as a way to encourage Coloradans to give back to their community. This year Owens and Norton joined Coloradans for the 127th anniversary of the state's admission to the Union by participating in the Tamarisk Removal Project.

"These volunteers set an important example for other Coloradans," said Norton. "I am proud to have been a part of this event to celebrate the human spirit at its best. Through their work in schools and senior centers, neighborhoods and churches, these volunteers have made a difference in the lives of many Coloradans."

Throughout the last five years, thousands of Coloradans have heeded that call to service, joining neighborhood and school groups, non-profits and faith-based organizations to support and enhance our communities. In 2001, Governor Owens established the Colorado Cares Volunteer Service Awards program as an effort to recognize some outstanding volunteers who regularly contribute to our communities.

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The following individuals and organizations were recipients of the Governor's 2003 Colorado Cares Volunteer Service Award:

***Aurora Police Department – Volunteer Spanish Interpreters program:
Bruno Caciagli, Richard Clifford, Roger Kidd, Miguel Martinez, and Carlos Rojas -
Aurora, CO (Arapahoe County)***

The Volunteer Spanish Interpreters for the Aurora Police Department are extraordinary people. They volunteer to ride with Patrol officers once a week, every week to be available to interpret for officers and Aurora citizens. Each of the volunteers has a full-time job, yet finds time to volunteer for the Department. They don't receive any compensation, and are happy to do what they do because they know they are helping Aurora's residents and police department.

Irma Creamer - Aurora, CO (Arapahoe County)

Irma Creamer is the driving force behind the success of Aurora Police Department's Volunteer Spanish Interpreters program. Once a volunteer for the program, Irma brings an extraordinary level of compassion and determination to her role as the program's coordinator. She exemplifies public service and provides invaluable assistance to the police officers who protect Aurora's citizens.

Victoria Carter - Greeley, CO (Weld County)

Victoria is being honored with a "Rising Star Award," given to a young person in Colorado who is an exemplary volunteer. She has volunteered more than one thousand community service hours over the past five years. She has been involved in the cancer community, 4-H service projects, Key Club, and acted as a "D.A.R.E." spokesperson and role model. She leads by example and has increased teen volunteerism in her community. The Greeley community is fortunate to have such a committed, resourceful leader among its youth.

First Data Corporation - Englewood, CO (Arapahoe County)

The employees at First Data Corporation have made this company a stellar example of citizenship and community pride. The employees of this company have volunteered year-round on behalf of a variety of organizations and causes. Programs that have benefited from First Data employees' generosity include Family Tree, Rainbow House, which provides childcare and support to families affected by HIV/AIDS; Del Pueblo Elementary School, through food, clothing and school supply drives; Hospice of Metro Denver's Children's Grieving Program; Samuels Elementary School's tutoring program; Adopt an Angel Christmas Outreach for needy children and the Rocky Mountain School for the Deaf.

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John Gratkins - Broomfield, CO (Broomfield County)

In all ways a senior truly needs assistance, John has come to service for them. For two years at the Broomfield Senior Center, John has delivered Meals on Wheels every week, taken Seniors to out of town medical appointments, and been the community's "handyman" for the chore program which serves low income seniors. The Center's volunteer coordinator praised John's dedication by saying, "His skills are not uncommon but his devotion to the community is. He quietly goes about his job taking care of things no one else does."

Lorene Linke - Granby, CO (Grand County)

Lorene is fondly called the "Community Cheer Leader" in Granby, Colorado, where she is the President of the all-volunteer board of the Grand County Events Center. Among her many accomplishments in more than 20 years of community service, Lorene has provided critical leadership as a 4-H leader and on the local Flying Heels Rodeo Arena Board. This former Grand County commissioner knows the importance of citizen participation. One colleague summed it up by saying, "Energy and enthusiasm for life and our community are Lorene Linke's hallmarks."

Paul Steinfort - Gypsum, CO (Eagle County)

Paul Steinfort has spent the past 23 years encouraging citizens of all walks of life in Eagle County to get critical health care screenings. Paul has been involved with the 9News' Health Fair in Eagle County since its creation and has served as its local chairperson for the past 16 years. Throughout the many years Paul has been encouraging citizens to take part in this annual health fair, participation has grown from 76 participants to nearly 700. In addition, Paul has been able to mobilize more than 140 volunteers to make this one of the most remarkable community service efforts in the region.

Bob and June Vanourek - Edwards, CO (Eagle County)

Bob and June Vanourek tirelessly contribute to the well being of the children of their "adoptive family." Bob and June adopted this family many years ago through a program that no longer exists; yet they have not given up their commitment to the family members. Through trying times and good times, they have been with these children every step of the way. Bob and June have not only made a commitment, but an invaluable connection with these children that proves family is not always defined by biology.

Jerry T. Vaughn - Longmont, CO (Boulder County)

Jerry Vaughn, a retired teacher and long-time resident of Longmont, has been a caring and effective volunteer with Project Work Together for nearly five years. Project Work Together matches trained volunteers to serve as one-on-one mentors to people who are struggling to get off welfare. He has helped three clients get back on their feet and on the road to self-sufficiency. Jerry sets an example of good citizenship and has given others hope, inspiration and valuable life skills.

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Maria D. Wilson - Lakewood, CO (Jefferson)

Maria Wilson is an amazing asset to the Headstart classroom at the Catholic Charities Early Learning Center. Though she is only asked to volunteer two hours each week, Maria has been volunteering for full 8 hour days since November of last year. With Maria's help, there is a lower adult to child ratio, which gives each of the children more valuable time with caring adults. Maria takes on all the duties of a teacher when she volunteers: makes lunches and snacks, assists with clean up and interacts well with the children. Maria is bilingual in Spanish and English and reads to the children in both languages.

Jane Norton was sworn in as Colorado's 46th Lieutenant Governor on January 13, 2003. Her responsibilities include serving as the chair of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs; acting as point person for the Owens Administration on health insurance reform; strengthening families by promoting adoption, Head Start collaborative efforts, mentoring and volunteerism; and serving as Colorado's delegate to the Aerospace States Association.

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